

METHAMPHETAMINE: CHILDREN AT RISK

Risks to children include:

- Exposure to explosive, flammable, toxic ingredients stored in kitchen cabinets, bathrooms and bedrooms
- Access to meth and paraphernalia (including needles)
- Presence of loaded weapons in the home and booby traps (due to paranoia of meth users)
- Physical and sexual abuse
- Exposure to high risk populations (sexual abusers, violent drug users)
- Neglect including poor nutrition and poor living conditions
- Presence of pornography



If a pregnant woman uses meth, the baby may experience:

- Premature birth
- Low birth weight
- Cerebral injuries
- Birth defects (up to 6 times more likely) including effects on the central nervous system, heart and kidneys
- Cerebral palsy and paralysis
- Dopamine depletion
- Abnormal sleep patterns
- Poor feeding
- Limpness
- Apparent depression
- Shaking and tremors
- Irritability
- Fits of rage
- Sensitivity to stimuli including human touch and regular light
- Coordination problems

In cases where an intervention is done and the child receives appropriate services, the child may not experience any significant long-term effects.

Sources: Dr. Rizwan Shah, Iowa Child Protection Council; Dr. Michael Sherman, Chief of Neonatology at UC Davis; Dr. Annette Greife, Yellowstone Pediatric Neurology

Parents who use meth may exhibit:

- Extreme mood fluctuations
- Violent behavior
- Depression
- Poor impulse control
- Lack of attention to hygiene
- Acute psychotic episodes
- Poly-drug abuse

As meth use continues, the parent is often unable to meet the basic needs of the child. Due to changes in brain chemistry, the parent may lose the capacity to provide appropriate care for children in the home.

Children whose parents use or manufacture meth may experience:

- Respiratory problems
- Delayed speech and language skills
- Elevated risk for kidney problems and leukemia
- Malnourishment
- Poor school performance/attendance problems
- Isolation
- Lack of immunizations and medical care
- Poor dental health
- Hyperactivity and attention deficit disorders
- Lice
- Obesity
- Developmental problems
- Violent behavior
- Drug usage
- Lack of boundaries/easy attachment to strangers

This document was prepared by the Kansas Methamphetamine Prevention Project supported by 2005CKWX0393, awarded by the Department of Justice. The opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Children who ingest meth may exhibit:

Agitation, inconsolability, tachycardia, respiratory problems (such as asthma), nausea, protracted vomiting, hyperthermia, ataxia, roving eye movements, seizures, and headaches.

Source: Dr. Jennifer Geyer, Mesa Center Against Family Violence



For more information, to schedule a presentation or to become involved in Drug Endangered Children efforts, contact Cristi Cain at (785) 266-8666 or ccain@parstopeka.com.
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